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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 002778

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/J AND S/SRAP

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: JAPAN RESPONDING POSITIVELY TO PRESIDENT'S
AFGHANISTAN SPEECH

REF: A. TOKYO 2599

[1](#)B. TOKYO 2764

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Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission James P. Zumwalt per reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: In a December 2 meeting with Embassy Political Minister-Counselor and in public statements by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and Foreign Minister, Japan voiced support for the President's new approach to Afghanistan, with Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's government saying it welcomes the President's proposal and believes it is consistent with Japan's own approach to Afghanistan. Similarly, editorial opinions among Japan's leading dailies are supportive as well. Nonetheless, there is some concern among GOJ officials that the U.S. may press Japan for additional financial commitments to Afghanistan beyond the \$5 billion, 5-year package announced November 10. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) In a December 2 meeting with Political Minister-Counselor, MOFA Director General for Middle East and African Affairs Toshiro Suzuki said that MOFA had been "impressed" with the President's speech, noting that two of the objectives, agricultural assistance and reintegration of moderate Taliban, were consistent with the GOJ's own assistance plans in the region. Suzuki said that the GOJ supports the U.S. position and received the President's remarks with "tremendous respect" given the burden that the U.S. bears in Afghanistan. MOFA Second Middle East Division told Poloff December 4 that Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka briefed Prime Minister Hatoyama on the President's plan December 3 along the lines of Suzuki's presentation to Pol M/C and that MOFA had received no "homework" as a result -- meaning that Hatoyama had been satisfied with the briefing. Japan is still finalizing the details of its recently announced \$5 billion aid package for Afghanistan (Ref A), Suzuki said, and the initial contributions will be incorporated into the supplemental budget set for Diet debate in early January 2010. He further emphasized that coordination with the U.S. on Japan's aid package will be essential for its success.

13. (U) Consistent with DG Suzuki,s comments, Foreign Minister Okada issued a press statement December 2 saying that "Japan values the role the U.S. is playing and welcomes the strategy it announced, as the stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan is a matter related to the stability of the world. Japan strongly expects that the dispatch of additional troops to Afghanistan by the U.S. and other countries, the enhancement of civil assistance and closer cooperation with Pakistan will improve the situation of Afghanistan and the region." The statement also reaffirmed that "Japan will continue proactively to play its role based on its new assistance package to Afghanistan and Pakistan announced on November 10."

14. (U) Immediately following the President's speech, Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS) Hirofumi Hirano, the government,s chief spokesman, welcomed the President,s announced plans to dispatch 30,000 additional troops by mid-2010 and to begin withdrawing forces by July 2011. Hirano also said that the GOJ would not increase its planned assistance to Afghanistan beyond the \$5 billion announced November 10. Kyodo News service reported that some Hatoyama administration officials worried that the U.S. might seek additional GOJ financial support. Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa told a Kanagawa Prefecture audience that "it is very likely that the Obama administration will call for additional help from Japan due to concerns that (the war in Afghanistan) could become something like what happened in Vietnam or Iraq." CCS Hirano downplayed such concerns, stressing that that the GOJ was "in the process" of implementing what has already been announced, referring to the \$5 billion, 5-year assistance package announced November 10.

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15. (U) Leading editorial opinions are generally supportive of the President,s proposal while emphasizing different concerns (Ref B). Liberal daily Manichi, noting the threat of possible terrorist use of nuclear weapons, said the decision to send more troops was "unavoidable." Liberal Asahi and moderate Yomiuri stressed the role of the Afghan government. Asahi said that the training of Afghan security forces and building GOA capacity for maintaining order would be essential. Yomiuri agreed that the GOA must improve its ability to provide security while also noting that the Karzai administration remains weak and that the U.S. "needs to make efforts to build influence with local tribes." Conservative Sankei and liberal Tokyo Shimbun emphasized the importance of international cooperation to improving security in Afghanistan and the region.

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